



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

Virtual Learning Day Guidance

In preparation for inclement winter weather, corporations should consider the increased need for virtual learning days. Schools may deploy virtual learning days for reasons including but not limited to professional development (PD), inclement weather, and illness. The use of virtual learning days does not require approval from the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE).

Virtual instruction is defined as instruction provided in an interactive learning environment created through technology in which the student is separated from a teacher by time or space, or both (IC 20-43-1-34). For guidance on best practices for virtual learning, please reference the [IDOE Educator Standards for Blended and Online Teaching](#) as well as the [Digital Learning Research Series](#). Both resources are available in the Indiana Learning Lab. To create a free Learning Lab account, visit the [LINK Portal](#) or the [Learning Lab website](#) directly and use your school email address to log in.

When utilizing virtual learning days, schools and corporations should keep the following in mind:

- All schools, including virtual schools, are required to provide at least 180 days of instruction each school year. If a school switches from a normal instructional day to a virtual learning day, in lieu of cancellation, due to inclement weather or other issue, they should change the day's code in their Student Information System (SIS). (This includes E-Learning, E-Learning in Lieu of Cancellation, and E-Learning PD.)
- Virtual instruction may consist of less than the required hours (five hours for grades one through six; six hours for grades seven through 12) and instead correspond to the amount of academically-engaged time provided in a non-remote, in-person instructional day. For example, a five-hour instructional day where content is delivered on-site consists of both academically engaged time as well as non-academically engaged time, such as passing periods.
- All schools, including virtual schools, should ensure that the virtual instruction or remote learning provided by the school meets the following requirements:
 - The virtual instruction or remote learning is of the same quality and rigor as the instruction that the student would have received if the student was attending in-person instruction at the school, as required by IC 20-30-2-2.5.
 - The curriculum and any other educational resources used in virtual instruction or remote learning are aligned to Indiana's Academic Standards, as required by IC 20-30-2-2.5.
- Local school corporations set their definitions of what it means to be in attendance or absent (which, in a virtual setting, could consider aspects like log-in duration). When reporting attendance, use the codes 'Virtual' or 'Virtual due to Covid' if the virtual day is due to an occurrence related to COVID-19.
- Clear communication must be provided to students, parents, and staff of the proposed virtual learning day(s), along with guidelines for students who do not have access to the internet or a device.

For more information, or questions regarding the above guidance, please contact IDOE's [Digital Learning Team](#).

